

# Tucson Fire Department

## Ambulance Transport Services & Billing FAQ Sheet



The Tucson Fire Department (TFD) is proud to serve the community with exceptional emergency medical services. This FAQ sheet provides answers to frequently asked questions about these services and associated billing.

1. Who provides ambulance services in the City of Tucson?
2. Will I get a bill if I am transported?
3. Who sets the rates for ambulance transports?
4. What is the average bill for an Advanced Life Support transport provided by TFD?
5. Why didn't the paramedic tell me that I was going to be charged?
6. Do patients sign a document acknowledging financial responsibility for any unpaid balances?
7. Who do I call if I have a question about a bill received by TFD?
8. Why does the City charge for ambulance services?



1. Who provides ambulance services in the City of Tucson?

TFD provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) transports, while Southwest Ambulance provides Basic Life Support transports to the Tucson community. The former type of transport, ALS, requires a higher level of medical care for potentially life threatening situations.

2. Will I get a bill if I am transported?

Regardless of who does the transport, you may get a bill. TFD makes every effort to seek reimbursement, first, from the patient's insurance carrier. Balances not covered by insurance are billed to the patient.

3. Who sets the rates for ambulance transports?

Ambulance transport rates in Arizona are established and regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services. TFD does *not* establish the rates.



**4. What is the average bill for an Advanced Life Support transport provided by TFD?**

The average bill for an Advanced Life Support transport is approximately \$1,200. However, many insurance plans cover a significant portion of this cost. Most of this bill comes from the ambulance transport base rate. The remainder consists of mileage and medical supplies.

**5. Why didn't the paramedic tell me that I was going to be charged?**

The paramedic's role at an emergency scene is to care for the patient, not negotiate medical billing.

**6. Do patients sign a document acknowledging financial responsibility for any unpaid balances?**

TFD attempts to get signatures from patients, if it is possible. If the patient is not able to sign, because of their condition, the paramedic notes this in the medical report.

**7. Who do I call if I have a question about a bill received by the Tucson Fire Department?**

Cost Recovery Office (520) 837-8331

**8. Why does the City charge for ambulance services?**

Ambulance fees reduce the tax burden of emergency medical services for City of Tucson residents by shifting a portion of the cost to users of the service or their medical insurance carrier. Currently, these fees help recover approximately half of the cost of this service to the community.



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